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descent of the sections and totems is counted through the mothers in all cases.

Dr. Howitt reports that the Chepara and Turrubul tribes on the coast from Point Danger to Brisbane and Pine rivers "had no social organization in classes or totems, the regulation of marriage being by locality; and descent of name in the male line."⁸ Speaking of the Kaiabara tribe at the Blackall or Bunya Bunya Ranges, he also asserts that "descent is in the male line."⁹

In 1898 I reported that the Turrubul tribe had the four intermarrying divisions, Barrang, Banjoor, Bunda and Derwain, with descent always reckoned on the female side, the children taking the phratry and totem name of their mother. At the same time I also showed that descent in the Kaiabara tribe is through the women and not through the men.¹⁰

In 1883 Dr. Howitt published a table of the four intermarrying divisions of the Mycoolon tribe on the Cloncurry River, Queensland, and stated that descent was through the father, giving as a reason that "under the influence of agnatic descent the girl is of the same class name as her mother's mother."¹¹

In 1898 I contradicted this statement and showed that descent in the Mycoolon tribe is counted through the mother only.¹² Dr. Howitt in his late work, "Native Tribes of Southeast Australia," does not refer to my contradiction, from which it may be inferred that he maintains his statement of 1883. Whether he does so or not, it becomes necessary for me to repeat that I am quite certain that descent in the tribe mentioned is indisputably maternal. It should be mentioned that Mr. E. Palmer had also previously arrived at the same conclusion as myself.¹³

* "Native Tribes of Southeast Australia," pp. 136-7.

⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 229.

⁹ *Proc. Amer. Philos. Soc.*, XXXVII., pp. 328-31, with map; *Journ. Roy. Soc. N. S. Wales*, XXXII., pp. 81-3.

¹⁰ *Journ. Anthropol. Inst., London*, XIII., p. 346.

¹¹ *Journ. Roy. Soc. N. S. Wales*, XXXII., pp. 82-3.

¹² *Journ. Anthropol. Inst., London*, XIII., p. 302.

I have thought it right to draw attention to the differences between Dr. Howitt's statements and mine in order that the anthropologists of America and Europe may have both our views before them to assist them in arriving at a conclusion regarding the line of descent in the cases under notice, because it is a matter of the highest importance.

R. H. MATHEWS

UNIFORMITY IN ENGLISH ABBREVIATIONS

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: Is not the time ripe for uniformity in English abbreviations?

Perhaps the best way of bringing about such uniformity is through the issue, by some authoritative body, of a code in which, so far as possible, the roots of the words would be retained, a code somewhat similar to that used by the employees of the Associated Press. From such a code writers could probably be induced to take all their abbreviations which are to appear in print.

Such a code, if supported by strong authority, would probably be used by many writers for the press; and if learned through a course of years would not likely be a great strain on the memory, even though somewhat elaborate.

The present time seems to be propitious because workers in many special fields are introducing abbreviations of their own devising, many of them calling for the consultation of a table. From the point of view of the general diffusion of technical knowledge, it will prove unfortunate if the trials of the lay reader are increased by abbreviation of technical terms and the most direct road to preventing this is to decrease the labor of the scientist by abbreviating common terms.

The undersigned would be glad to hear from any parties who are interested in such a plan.

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INDISCRIMINATE KILLING OF MUSK OXEN

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: A number of facts are coming to light at the present time which must, in the minds of all thoughtful

people, throw a grim and sinister side light on Arctic exploration as carried on by Americans. In the *Yale Alumni Weekly* of October 8, p. 56, for instance, is a highly interesting human document from the pen of Mr. George Borup, a young man who accompanied Lieutenant Peary on his recent expedition. He recites some of his experiences as follows:

. . . Here [at Cape Morris Jesup, past Lockwood's furthest of 83° 24'] we stayed two weeks. . . . Here we lived high, killing 47 musk oxen in four hunts, and dogs and men had sirloin and tenderloin all the time. As none of us had had any fresh meat in three months it was more than good. I got mixed up in one herd of sixteen and took some good photos of them. Then we killed them all by gun. I beat all records, Duffy's included, when I got within ten feet of a big bull, held at bay by two dogs, to take his photo, and he charged the dogs, which happened to be on a line between us. I only hit the high spots for a hundred yards or so. Coming back . . . went off on a hunting trip. Killed four musk oxen, 100 miles away, and brought back a calf on the sledge alive to the boat, only to have it die the next day. When we got down to Eskimo land we put in about four days walrus hunting. In all about 72 were secured.

It thus appears that the indiscriminate killing of the musk oxen has been the common diversion of Americans in the north. Other explorers have been more thoughtful, notably the Swedes, who made an unsuccessful attempt to domesticate these splendid animals in Lapland. It is well enough known that the musk oxen once spread southward to the Hudson Bay country, and westward to the Mackenzie River, and that they are now on the verge of extinction, but a few hundred being perchance all that are left. In short, Mr. Borup does not appear to have been aware of the deadly results following in the train of his hunting.

But it is difficult to understand such a recital, such an exhibition of the "*mord lust*" by any human being, leaving out of account the unwitting confession that this slaughter took place just about the calving time, or a little before in the case of the larger herds, it might seem. And did this finally compassionate hunter expect to suckle the last musk ox he saw, the little calf he took back to the boat, "only to have it die"!

In the main, however, we hold Lieutenant Peary directly responsible. He should have issued orders to protect these animals, and if our Arctic exploration had been carried on on a higher and more scientific plane this would have been done. Nor do I hesitate to say that in my judgment it was of more importance to avoid the slaughter of these musk oxen and walrus than it has proven to march across the ice, only to bring back the records of a scanty performance. The man who is broad minded and thoughtful and merciful, and careful of his temper, and who describes with the needed care a single new beetle or brachiopod, deserves better than these notoriety-seeking types of scientists. Indeed it is time that the halo they wear should be more carefully examined. For my part, I have never seen the day when I did not find it easier to work in the field than in the laboratory, and I believe it is so with most scientific workers.

There is, with the great increase in comfort within recent years, relatively no more risk in the glorious holiday that an Arctic exploration can with ordinary forethought be made to mean, than there is in more serious scientific work indoors.

In view of such pertinent facts it is greatly to be hoped that future Arctic exploration will be carried on in a more humane and scientific spirit.

G. R. WIELAND

SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

The Science and Philosophy of the Organism.

The Gifford Lectures before the University of Aberdeen. By HANS DRIESCH, Ph.D., Heidelberg. Vol. I., 1907, pp. xiii + 329; Vol. II., 1908, pp. xvi + 381. London, A. and C. Black.

Das Kausalitätsproblem der Biologie. Von Dr. med. FRIEDRICH STRECKER, Privatdozent an der Universität Breslau. Pp. viii + 153. Leipzig, Engelmann. 1907.

Driesch's Gifford Lectures give the English reader his first introduction to an interesting and important movement in recent German thought—the *rapprochement* between biology and philosophy that has been taking place